

# Indonesian delegation stages 'walk out' during Benny Wenda speech at MSG in Vanuatu

Friday 22 September 2023, by [LOKOBAL Onoy](#) (Date first published: 24 August 2023).

**Wamena — The Republic of Indonesia delegation who are taking part in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Leaders Summit (KTT) in Port Vila, the capital city of Vanuatu, staged a “walk out” during a session on Wednesday August 23.**

The reason for the walk out is not yet known but it occurred as soon as Benny Wenda, the president of the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP), was given an opportunity to give a speech representing the West Papua nation. The walk out was recorded in a short video which quickly went viral on social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and even [YouTube](#). The video recording of the Indonesian delegation leaving the location of an official MSG forum, which has circulated widely, was around 29 minutes long. The 15 or so people can be seen silently, without uttering a word, leaving the room carrying their bags. It was also apparent that the incident was very confusing for other delegates, especially the MSG leaders. “I’m embarrassed. We’re only guests but continue to put on airs for the hosts and grumble. On the contrary the guests are impolite. Yeah, just get out. We’re Asian, they are Melanesian”, wrote the owner of a Twitter account named “Forget Me” after posting the video. The 22<sup>nd</sup> MSG Leaders Summit took up the theme “Making the MSG Relevant and Influential”. As quoted by Radio New Zealand Pacific on Wednesday, Wenda said that he along with the West Papua delegation are optimistic that their dream of becoming a full member of the MSG would be realised. Wenda said that he is convinced that the MSG meeting in Vanuatu would give the ULMWP full membership. “I’m very confident”, he said, adding “The whole world is watching and this is a test for the leadership to see whether they will save West Papua”. As reported by Radio New Zealand, MSG chairperson and Vanuatu Prime Minister Alatoi Ismail Kalsakau has confirmed that the ULMWP’s application to become a full MSG member will be prioritised by the MSG leadership. Wenda admitted to Radio New Zealand that the ULMWP had been lobbying to become part of the MSG agenda for more than a decade, but so far it has not borne fruit, and the ULMWP still only has the status of an observer at the MSG. “All of the groups [which are part of the] ULMWP are already in Port Vila, including the West Papua Council of Churches (WPCC) and village heads [Papua Traditional Council, DAP]. We are waiting to become full members. That is our dream, our wish. Based on our blood and race, we’re entitled to become full [MSG] members”, he said. Wenda also said that the Papuan people have lived under Indonesian rule for some 60 years without any hope or security whatsoever. So he hopes that the MSG Leaders summit can make the right decision. Wenda expressly asked the Melanesian leaders to have the capacity to deal with regional problems. “Why [is Indonesia] here, [what] are they afraid of?”, he asked. “When we become full members, we are ready to involve [Indonesia] and seek a solution, that’s our aim. This is part of a peaceful solution”, said Wenda. Around 30 or so members of the West Papua delegation are in Vanuatu to take part in the Summit. The delegation includes representatives of the WPCC, the executive, legislative and judicial sections of the ULMWP, the DAP as well as individuals affiliated with the ULMWP. The walk out by the Indonesian delegation was also discussed during a Papua Paradox E-38 event titled “Is it true that the NKRI delegation walked out

of a MSG KTT session today, why? It's embarrassing".

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**Onoy Lokobal**

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**P.S.**

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